

3. Gender & Gender Identity

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Learning goals

1. Socially constructed gender vs. biological sex
2. Gender as a system of norms and hierarchy
3. Gender in identities and culture
4. Intersections of identities and social positions
5. How to challenge the gender system in your life



“Masculine” or “feminine”?



sensitive

a pilot

adventurous

active

passive

emotional

wealthy

bad

a nurse

rational

an assistant

careful

good

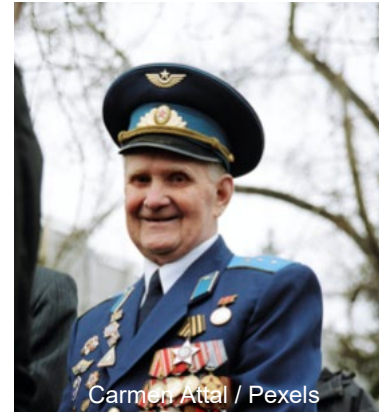
a doctor

tough

Socially constructed gender

- 'Stories' about the place of men and women in the world
- Bipolar, complementary and hierarchical relation
- Gender norms and gender roles
- Gendered distribution of work

Read more: [Acker](#), [Butler](#), [Lindsey](#), [Weedon](#).



Everything, everywhere, informs us of gender

- politics, legislation
- religion, education, family
- history, science
- business
- media, arts, literature
- popular culture, movies
- sports, fashion
- language
- identities



Read more: [Burr, Hall, Lindsey](#)

What do we do when we do gender?

Doing gender means reproducing gender norms in our identities by

- acting, dressing, talking and relating to people,
- choosing our work, professional goals and priorities
- taking family and relationship roles

as expected from our sex.

Read more: [Butler](#), [West](#) and [Zimmerman](#)

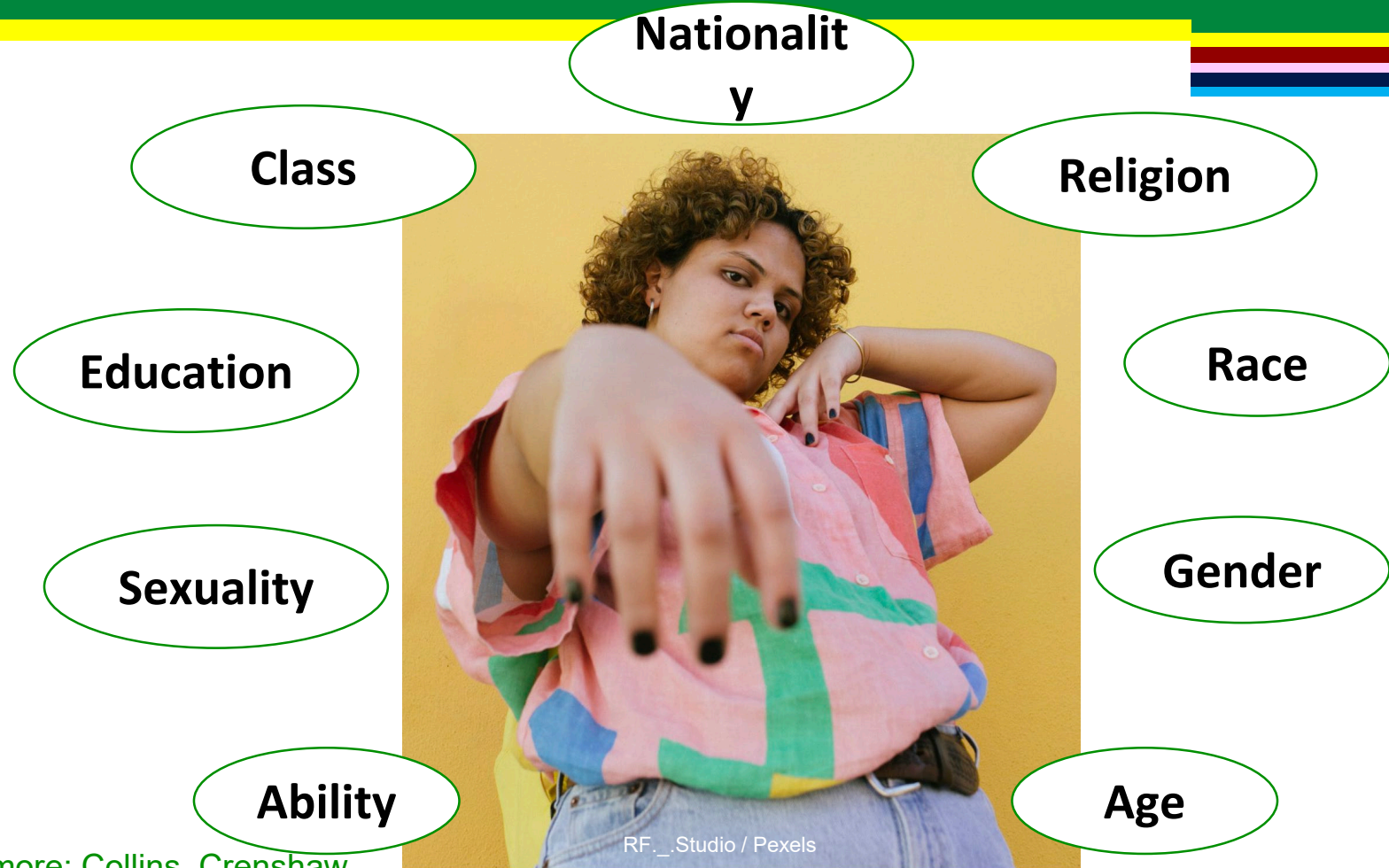


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Intersections of identities and social positions



Read more: Collins, Crenshaw

Conclusion — Gender and Identity

The problem with gender is that it prescribes how we should be rather than recognising how we are.

Now imagine how much happier we would be, how much freer to be our true individual selves, if we didn't have the weight of gender expectations.

—Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie—

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